

TO: CALFED Policy Group
FROM: Torri J. Estrada, Program Director, Urban Habitat Program
Member, Bay-Delta Advisory Council
DATE: April 17, 2000

Torri Estrada

Dear Members of the CALFED Policy Group:

On behalf of over 30 environmental justice and community-based groups concerned about the future of water management in the Bay-Delta, I write you to discuss the topic of environmental justice and its relationship to the CALFED program. As you may already be aware, environmental justice representation and perspectives have only been a recent part of CALFED's discussions. Although CALFED has made progress on environmental justice through the appointment of two environmental justice representatives to Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC), this action alone is woefully inadequate, not only to meet its regulatory requirements under Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and various state legislation addressing environmental justice, but falls short of providing an effective response to existing environmental justice problems related to the management of water in the Bay-Delta.

The Environmental Justice Coalition (Coalition) submitted lengthy comments on CALFED's preferred program alternative to BDAC at its April 13 meeting (see attached letter dated April 12, 2000 to Sunne McPeak and Mike Madigan). Several Coalition members provided brief testimony on environmental justice and the preferred program alternative during the last BDAC meeting, emphasizing the need for CALFED not only to adopt an Environmental Justice Principle, but also to dedicate the staffing and resources among its federal and state agencies necessary to implement environmental justice-related goals and objectives across its programs. Furthermore, reiterating the recommendations in the letter, I provided comments and suggestions on how CALFED could address existing environmental justice problems and address disproportionate impacts of its preferred program alternative and subsequent programs actions (My comments, and the attached letter, are summarized in the attached overview of recommendations). BDAC members generally agreed with and supported our recommendations for addressing environmental justice.

The Coalition respectfully requests that the Policy Group carefully reviews and supports the adoption of an Environmental Justice Principle and Actions for CALFED's preferred program alternative and Record of Decision (see attached). The Coalition also requests that the Policy Group considers and positively responds to recommendations related to environmental justice that are forthcoming from BDAC co-chairs, Sunne McPeak and Mike Madigan. We understand CALFED Director Steve Ritchie and his staff have committed to developing a proposal to address environmental justice for consideration during your May meeting. We urge you to work closely with Steve and his staff in developing this proposal.

The Coalition stands firm in its resolve for CALFED to proactively address environmental justice and remains committed to assisting CALFED agencies in developing effective analyses and program strategies during the environmental review period and after issuance of the Record of Decision. We appreciate the Policy Group's commitment to environmental justice and its just consideration of the Coalition's recommendations and comments on the preferred program alternative. If any questions or concerns should arise during your review of our materials, please feel free to contact me or Arlene Wong at the Pacific Institute.

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